

Inside the Law

The Monthly Newsletter from
San Bernardino County District Attorney
Michael A. Ramos

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ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY JIM HACKLEMAN RETIRES AFTER 38 YEARS OF SERVICE

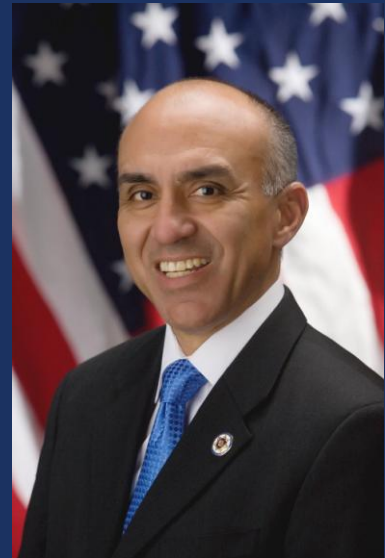


Assistant District Attorney Jim Hackleman seated at his desk. ADA Hackleman, who began his tenure with the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office on August 20, 1973, was recently awarded the Peace Officer Retirement Certificate of Commendation by State Attorney General Kamala Harris for recognition of his meritorious service in support of California law enforcement. (DA Photo)

THINGS REMEMBERED

By Assistant District Attorney Jim Hackleman

A few weeks ago, I was invited to write a piece marking my retirement and departure from the Office. I agreed but wondered if I had anything of value to impart to our people in the District Attorney's Office. I thought about it for a couple of days. I remember so many things, so many cases, so many courtrooms, and so many people I worked with. It is difficult to pick just a couple of things out—moments that have meaning.



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FEATURED RESOURCES



WELFARE FRAUD UNIT

To report Welfare Fraud via phone, call the
WELFARE FRAUD HOTLINE at (877)-605-2321
or [click here](#) to file an online report.

RECENT PRESS RELEASES

9-15-2011:

[District Attorney Files Charges in
San Bernardino Toddler's Death](#)

8-10-2011:

[Highland Man Arrested for
Workers' Comp Fraud](#)

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1: [ADA Hackleman Retires After
38 Years](#)

PAGE 2: [Convictions](#)

PAGE 4: [Parting Words](#)

PAGE 7: [In the Community: DDA Cary
Epstein Pushes Forward](#)

PAGE 9: [SDDA Britt Imes Featured in
VV Daily Press](#)

Two cases came to mind that had personal meaning for me. One was a case involving a little 10-year old boy who was spending the weekend with his father. His mother and father had divorced with the boy being their only child. His father loved motorcycles and enjoyed taking his boy for a ride. Outside of Mentone, just after sundown, where the road goes into a series of turns, a driver coming in the opposite direction crossed the center line and collided with the motorcycle. The father lost his leg. The little boy was killed. The driver left them laying in the road and ran off. I was convinced he was under the influence, but since he was not arrested until the next day, we could never prove it. We could only file felony Hit and Run with Injury with the maximum just a few years in prison.

I met with the mother and father and grandparents and advised them that there was little way the system could provide them with any satisfaction. No sentence that the court could give could in any way recognize the overwhelming loss. The pain that they were experiencing, especially that of the mother, was evident. I insisted that the defendant plead guilty as charged with no agreement on sentence. He did. My intention was to argue for the maximum for leaving a little boy to die in the road. Before the sentencing the mother visited me again and left a scrapbook with me of pictures and keepsakes of this little boy. I remember that he loved the Los Angeles Dodgers and his hero was Ron Cey. It was most touching.

The mother and father accompanied me to the sentencing. I



argued loud and long for prison. The judge gave him a year in County Jail. I was covering many other cases that day.

In 2002, Hackleman received the Prosecutor of the Year award from WeTip. Pictured Left: In 2003, he received the San Bernardino County Bar Association Florentino Garza Fortitude Award in recognition of his special personal qualities and all he accomplished in his career. (DA Photo/Chris Lee)

CONVICTIONS

FRED NASH, 46, was convicted by prosecutor Jamie Adams for the 90-minute home-invasion robbery of a family that included two adults and two children who were present. Nash was armed and masked, but at one point during the incident, Nash lifted his mask to taunt the family—an act that ultimately aided one of the victims to positively ID him. The defendant also left behind a latex glove he wore during the robbery that led to a positive DNA match with Nash. Nash, a repeat offender, will spend 168 years to life in prison under the three strikes law in California.

DAVION WHITMORE, 17, and **CARLOS DUBOSE**, 19, were convicted by DDA Beth Houser for the brutal torture-murder of a 43-year-old man. Both defendants were living at a group home in Yucaipa when they carried out the murder with a closet dowel. Whitmore, who was under the age of 16 at the time of the crime, faces a maximum 25 to life, plus life in prison, and Dubose faces life without

But I did have a minute to tell the parents that I was sorry that I could not do better for them. The mother smiled, hugged me and thanked me for all I had done. I returned the little scrapbook. We had a brief look into each other's eyes and she departed. I returned to my calendar. Two days later her parents called me and asked if I knew what had happened. What were they talking about? Their daughter had left the sentencing, gone home, and shot herself. She was gone. I had a tough time dealing with that. Was there something else that I could have done? Something I could have said? She could not live without her precious little boy and decided she needed to be with him again.



ADA Hackleman's most recent accomplishment is the creation of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit, which handles complaints involving those people holding public office. Pictured Above: ADA Hackleman with Attorney General Kamala Harris and DA Mike Ramos. (DA Photo / Chris Lee)

Every prosecutor has stories of tragedy that impact them during their career. My story was a constant reminder to me that what we do matters. It matters a great deal. Whether it is a story of death or injury or a burglary of your home, a theft of your car or a theft of your personal identity, every victim needs to have a sense that society has recognized the loss and somehow made it right—that there is some sense of justice. Sometimes we can bring that to our victims. Sometimes we cannot. But career prosecutors are motivated by, and never forget, experiences like mine.

The other case I recall for you is not a death case or an armed robbery but just a case of theft. The twist was that it was the loss of 18 cockatoos. The case was a "Friday pass off" where

the possibility of parole. Both men are scheduled to be sentenced on November 4, 2011.

CLARK MAHONEY JR., a 45-year-old former elementary school teacher, was convicted of possessing child pornography. The case was prosecuted by Fontana Family Violence Unit Deputy District Attorney Morrissa Cardoza. He faces up to 3 years in state prison.

IN THE COMMUNITY: DDA CARY EPSTEIN PUSHES FORWARD WITH THE GANG RESISTANCE INTERVENTION PARTNERSHIP

Lead Deputy District Attorney Cary Epstein saw a need in the community and decided to fill it. After having spent several years prosecuting minors and young adults for violent gang crime in the Fontana Gang Unit, he realized we needed a program that

the assigned prosecutor was already in trial, and I was picked to take over the case with jury trial starting Monday morning. So that weekend I met with the victim at his Colton bird farm and learned about the birds and the theft. The defendant was charged with Receiving Stolen Property, as we could not prove that he was the actual thief. He claimed that the birds recovered from him were given to him by his wealthy father in Michigan. He drove them back here in a van to San Bernardino. The defendant was an arrogant thief who retained a slick attorney from LA. The detectives were Bob Beach and Les Beck from the Sheriff's Department. They despised this guy. He was an unabashed liar. Unfortunately, he bailed and was out of custody. He would plead to nothing and brought his cocky attitude to court and even wore a wig to hide his long, stringy hair. Beach and Beck encouraged me to go after him, and committed to doing any further investigation I needed during trial. With all of the twists and turns during the 3-week trial there was plenty for them to do.

It was an interesting time in my career where I was questioning whether or not I was aggressive enough in the courtroom to be an effective prosecutor. These detectives got me so fired up that I went after this guy. I even asked him if he was wearing a wig when he got on the stand. His attorney was furious. I ridiculed his description of the trip across the United States with those noisy birds and called it "the greatest trek since Noah's Ark." The jury convicted him and, at my request, the judge took him immediately into custody. We prosecutors do love to tell our war stories. And this was by no means a major case. But this trial made me think that I could be a prosecutor. And the feeling of satisfaction I had working with the team of Beach and Beck, all doing everything we could to convict this bum, was one of the most satisfying experiences of my life. Beach and Beck and I became good friends. I remember visiting Bob at his home a couple of times. Wonderful family. Bob passed away a few years ago. And Beck left the Sheriff's Department many years back. Had not heard from him, or of him, since. Recently I opened an e-mail at work from D. Lester Beck. Somehow he heard that I was retiring. He extended his congratulations and recalled our old "bird case" together with Bob and me. He said he had gone into business, and was now retired and living in a little town called Coarsegold, California, at the entrance to Yosemite. Of all the kind e-mails I have received, none meant more to me than hearing from Les Beck

would educate minors, parents, and teachers about the dangers of gangs.

One year ago, with the help of two interns, Epstein created the Gang Resistance Intervention Partnership, also known as G.R.I.P.

"I began to review a number of programs that dealt with gang reduction, but felt that there was not one particular program that addressed all the needs," said Epstein. "There are other gang programs that share the same acronym, but I believe ours covers areas not addressed by the other programs."

The following interview was conducted with Cary Epstein, Lead Deputy District Attorney of the Central Division Gang Unit for the San Bernardino County District Attorney:

What are some of the specific components of the G.R.I.P. program?

Like some other programs ours contains an educational component. However, ours begins addressing the dangers of gangs to children as young as the 2nd grade. We then do a follow-up in the 5th and now 7th grade. Within the next several years we will expand to have a course in the 9th grade. Our curriculum, which we

that recalled those days when I thought I was the best attorney in the courthouse, and Beach and Beck and I were the best team in law enforcement.

These kinds of experiences inspire us to do our best. When everything works and the guilty verdict comes in, there is nothing better. Many prosecutors, once the trial is over, realize that they are just the most visible part of a team. Many stop to thank all of those who helped to bring in the verdict. So often it is the extra efforts of a clerk or a detective or a DA investigator, a victim advocate, or someone in the tech crew who helped to put together a jury presentation that makes all of the difference. To be the prosecutor and leader of such teams that bring justice to our victims is a feeling like no other.



ADA Hackleman speaking at his retirement gathering on October 6, 2011, at the San Bernardino County Superior Courthouse. (DA Photo / Chris Lee)

You note that I do not first call to mind my experiences as a manager. The thrills come in the courtroom. The hard work comes in the office. I have made hundreds of decisions on cases, personnel matters and myriads of issues. I hope I have done right by folks and that most of my decisions were the right ones. One of the hardest things managers do is deciding on attorney assignments, which cases and offices and courtrooms and positions to send an attorney to. I always thought that those were the most important and the toughest decisions I had to make. If you put the right attorneys in the right spots, most other things will come out right. As I look back, I think about the effect of those decisions, the impact those attorneys had on their victims by virtue of that assignment, the officers they worked with, and even the

created, focuses on the dangers of gangs, positive choices and respect for others and property. The 2nd grade is taught over a 7 week course once a week. The 5th grade curriculum is a 9 week course. The 7th grade course is 10 weeks. The classes are taught by school security officers with the Rialto Unified School District.

The program also has a parent component. We hold parent meetings once a month at the schools where the classes are taught. We have speakers attend and provide various presentations during the meetings. Topics that are covered are the dangers of gangs, truancy and neighborhood watch. We also try to schedule speakers that are requested by the parents.

The program also has a truancy component. This component is in the initial stages of the program. It is the eventual goal to work with the truancy DDA and others within the Rialto Unified School District to target the children at the particular school that are habitual truants. We will be able to accomplish this with truancy sweeps or particular students. Once the sweeps occur we will get with the school and parents to work

people they met and became friends with and, on occasion, even married, while in those assignments. In some ways it seems that all of those decisions were destined and that I was just another gear in the precision machinery of life. I always had a great staff to work with who helped keep me on the right path. I tried to be fair with people, and I hope I achieved some semblance of that.

All in all, my time in this Office was the privilege of a lifetime. No one could have had a better career than I had. I consider myself a very lucky man to have had a position where we do such important work for our citizens and are daily associated with such fine people who strive to make the system work. I am not afraid of retirement. You just know when it is your time. And this is mine. I look forward to taking care of my wonderful wife, my fine family and myself. And I hope to travel some, both near and far. And one day, one of those trips will be to beautiful Yosemite. And I might just stop off in Coarsegold and have a beer with an old friend of mine and talk about what great crime fighters we once were.



To view a brief video of ADA Hackleman's acceptance of the Peace Officer Retirement Certificate of Commendation by State Attorney General Kamala Harris [click here](#).

PARTING WORDS

"As Assistant District Attorney, Jim has been my right-hand man, and more importantly, my friend. Jim has been with me when we have made the toughest decisions that have come before the DA's Office, and each time he has brought to the table his ethics, integrity, his

on a plan to increase attendance.

What are some of the specific successes/rewards that you have seen with your work?

The positives that I have seen through the program are many. Through the program we have been able to build a stronger relationship with the Rialto Unified School District and the community. By having the security personnel teach the course it builds a stronger relationship with them and the students. The students also seem to be very receptive of the message of the dangers of gangs. I have also seen parents during the meetings reach out to us for assistance for their older children who are starting down the wrong path.

What do you gain from doing this?

The only thing I gain from the program is the hope that we have a positive impact on the students to steer them away from the dangers and influences of gangs. I also said if we even prevent one child from joining a gang through the program that we are making a positive impact.

What is your vision for this program?

wisdom and his sense of grace that we have all come to know so well. As the head of my Public Integrity Unit, Jim was also instrumental in our goal of cleaning up corruption in San Bernardino County, and he was the driving force behind government reform. He will truly leave a legacy for the citizens of this county. I wish him well on his new adventure.”

Mike Ramos
District Attorney

“Jim is remembered as someone who addressed any matter with the end in mind--and took us there. He is truly an exceptional leader and manager.”

Mike Smith
Chief, Bureau of Investigation

“I can’t think of anyone who has contributed more to our office over the years than Jim Hackleman. He has been the voice of reason that has wisely guided us through many difficult situations. He has this calm, fair and intelligent way of dealing with issues and people no matter how stressful the circumstances. The old adage of ‘being able to keep your head when everybody around you is losing theirs’ certainly applies to Jim. And then there is that infectious laugh of his. No two ways about it, I’m going to miss Jim a lot.”

Dennis Christy
Assistant District Attorney

“For as long as I can remember, Jim Hackleman has been the ultimate source for guidance, knowledge, and wisdom on the most difficult issues and decisions that the District Attorney’s Office has faced. Jim’s unique style of consensus building, diplomacy, grace, and professionalism has been a model for us all. We could always rely on Jim’s winning smile, warm greeting, and genuine love for doing what he calls ‘God’s work’ to inspire us and brighten our day. Jim, we are happy for you and wish you well in your retirement, but also sad because we will miss you greatly.”

Gary S. Roth
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Desert Division

“What I will remember most about Jim Hackleman is his calm professional demeanor and approach to the various challenges the Office faces. He is a great listener and was always able to calm people down and suggest a constructive solution to difficult problems. It is hard to imagine how the office will get along without him. His sense of perspective and humor will be truly missed. He will never be forgotten.”

John Kochis
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Rancho Division

My vision of the program is that it continues to grow and be moved into other districts throughout San Bernardino County. Cost like everywhere has been an issue. During the first year we had zero funding. I spent my own money on various items for the program. Recently we were awarded a \$50,000 grant through Southwest Border Prosecution Initiative. This has allowed us to purchase computers for the instructors, a mascot for the program, and other items for the students.

The money also allows us to hopefully expand the parent and truancy aspects of the program.

How can others get involved?

Anyone who is interested in the program can contact me. We are always looking for volunteers to assist in the program in any way possible. This could include assisting with one of the aspects of the program, be a speaker at one of the parent meetings or become a member of the partnership. We are always looking for other or businesses that would be willing to donate their time or resources to the program.

"Some of you cannot recall a time when Jim Hackleman was not in the office. I have been around so long I am not one of them. I recall the day he came back to the office and all the stories I heard about Jim. All were true. He was as smart, kind, fair and even tempered as everyone said. And funny on top of that! It has been a great privilege to work with Jim, learn from him and see his even-tempered, calm approach in the sometimes turbulent days we experience in the office. What an act to follow! We will miss him greatly. The best to you Jim and thanks for the memories!

Karen Bell
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Juvenile Division

"I first met Jim Hackleman in May of 1979. I had just completed my second year of Law School and was interested in clerking for the DA's Office. Back then, these were paying jobs, as I recall. I met with Jim in his office and was immediately impressed by the way he treated me. He was genuinely interested in my studies, my plans after law school and my personal life. I didn't get a summer position as the positions were already filled. Looking back, I should have been disappointed, but I wasn't. Jim had made me feel good about myself and the direction I was taking in my career. This personal skill exhibited by Jim would affect my life later on.

"Jumping ahead a few years, after spending some time in private practice, Jim was my SDDA and later my CDDA in the DA's Office in Central. Jim was always the person who would call you into his office, or in one case traveling to Redlands to give me the good or bad news of a new assignment. Jim's style was to make you feel good by telling you what a good job you were doing in your current assignment and that you were the only person who could perform this new assignment. The new assignment may not have been the most glamorous or have the highest profile, but it was important to the Office. In the end you felt good about yourself and appreciated by the Office. I am sure that there are others who have been what I still refer to as "Hacklemanned."

Clark Hansen
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Central Division

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PARTING WORDS (CONT.)

"Jim Hackleman has been the moral and ethical compass for the District Attorney's office for more than two decades. His leadership and guidance will be missed by all. Through good times and difficult times, Jim offered sound advice, good humor, and was always a gentleman to all. We are all better prosecutors and people because of Jim's presence and influence. His retirement is beyond well deserved. Best Wishes."

Gary Fagan
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Special Units

VICTORVILLE PROSECUTOR FEATURED IN DAILY PRESS



Supervising Deputy District Attorney Britt Imes was recently featured in the Victorville Daily Press. [Click here](#) to read Staff Writer Tomoya Shimura's feature.

